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FALL EDUCATION ISSUE

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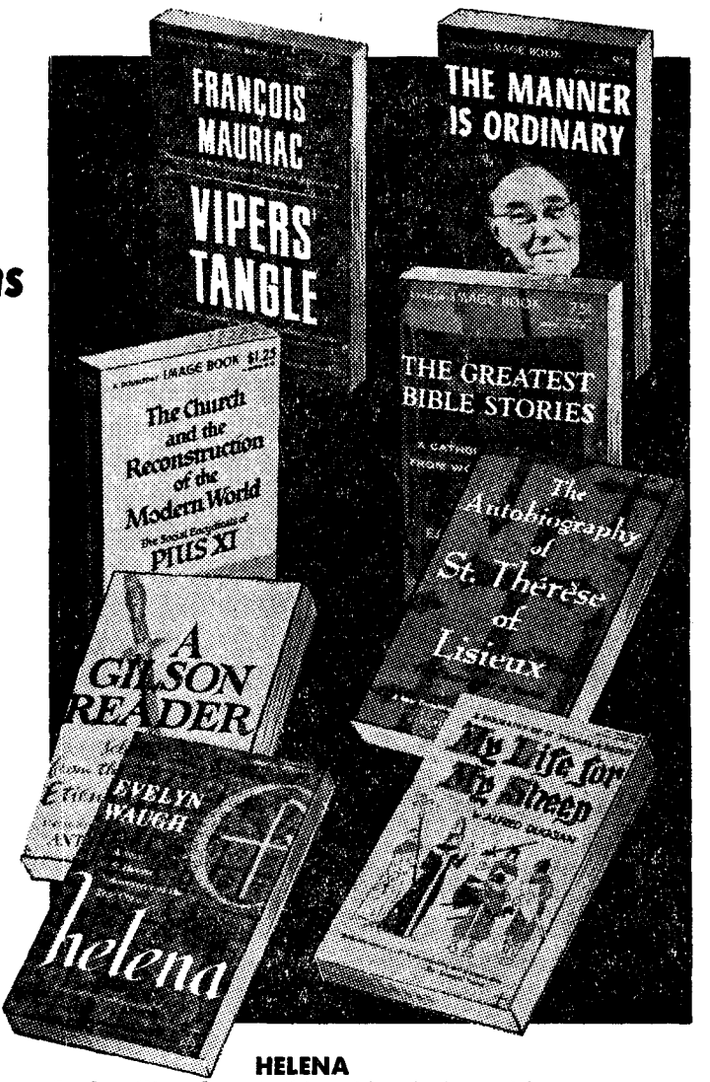

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THE
Commonweal
A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts
THIRTY-THIRD YEAR OF PUBLICATION

week by week

THE PRESIDENT AND THE GOVERNOR

AN OLD SAYING has it that a man's virtues become his vices, and this seems a particularly apt observation in the case of President Eisenhower. Witness, for example, his initial response to the question of integration in Little Rock.

The President's special gift, as we all know, is for conciliation, moderation, the avoidance of extremes. If everybody likes Ike, it seems equally true that Ike would like everybody to like him, and is himself prepared to like everybody. Trying to please everybody is, however, a very difficult business at best, and in matters of principle it is just not possible to be at the same time both for and against. Nevertheless, it seems to be the President's wish to do just this.

It must be admitted that his attempt has sometimes been successful to an astonishing degree. Mr. Eisenhower has been able to maintain an image of himself which is surely unique in the world of politics. He is almost universally held to be the man of good will, willing to compromise in any area because he is convinced that all human differences are merely of degree and must inevitably melt away in the warmth of generosity and good-fellowship. This is precisely his appeal. He stands for unity rather than division, harmony rather than strife, the promise of the happy ending rather than blood, sweat and tears.

Unfortunately, the President's basic assumptions, attractive as they may be, are simply not true, or are not true in all cases. All positions are not reconcilable, and to wait and see, hoping for the best, is not always and necessarily the best course to follow.

It is true that on a number of occasions in the past the policy of letting sleeping dogs lie, accentuating the positive and ignoring the negative, has proved to be a good tactic, and by this means Mr. Eisenhower has been able on certain points to save the nation from bitter and unproductive conflict. The President's conduct on such occasions has been characterized as patient, far-seeing, indefatigably hopeful, and the Eisenhower approach has been hailed as that of a genius. The President's first moves in the most recent national emergency—the situation provoked by Governor Faubus in Little Rock, Arkansas—were completely typical, and yet, ironically, they were condemned on almost every side. It would be understandable, and again quite typical, if Mr. Eisenhower should feel puzzled and hurt at the inconsistency of his critics.

THERE HAVE been those, of course, who have from the beginning regarded the Eisenhower philosophy with dubiousness, and have evaluated his Presidential actions one by one, one way or the other, in issue after issue. They have supported the President when they thought his policies deserved support, and criticized him on those occasions when they thought his position wrong. But there are others whose criticisms now the President might well resent. He has offered always the same outlook and presumptions, and it is unfair for those who in the past accepted the presumptions and outlook without examination to make merely semantic changes in describing them today—to use "timidity" in place of "caution," "cowardice" in place of "refusal to brawl," "naivete" in place of "sincerity."

But from any point of view, the President's original attempt to compromise with Governor Faubus in his defiance of the Federal court in Little Rock was a serious and fundamental mistake. Governor Faubus yielded finally to the court order

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directing him to remove the National Guard from Central High School, but he has been permitted to reduce grievously the possibility of peaceful integration of the schools in Little Rock, the state of Arkansas, and throughout the South. He has thwarted the purpose of the civic authorities and school board of Little Rock, inflamed the feelings of race-hatred, made further violence a sickening likelihood where it was not before, in Little Rock, tragically, and not only there.

That Governor Faubus has been able to do these things is, unhappily but unquestionably, due in some part to President Eisenhower's characteristic "caution" and "refusal to brawl." But this was one of the issues where the Eisenhower mottoes were insufficient. The costly lesson of Little Rock, where Federal troops may be needed to protect the peace, is that it was not enough to put an arm around the Governor and wish him "Good luck!" to announce satisfaction in the Governor's intention to find his own solution to the problem at hand, to hope for the best—and do nothing.

AIRLIFT TO AMMAN

THE FACT THAT American prowess on the battlefield has not been matched by our leaders at ensuing conference tables has had dire consequences for many peoples. Such failure cannot be traced specifically to either political party; it reflects a weakness for which both Democrats and Republicans are responsible. A similar ineptitude is reflected in our postwar programs of economic and military aid, for faulty appraisals have done much to deprive the United States, and the world, of the fruits of what might have been achieved through our superior productive capacity.

Soviet Russia is making much greater headway than we in the Middle East and at considerably less expenditure. Its proficiency at subversion and infiltration might explain some of the Russian success in a troubled area. But may it not also be that their experts have studied the complexities of the situation there with substantially greater pains and thereby achieved a much surer grasp of actual conditions?

The British, longer and more intimately involved than we, likewise tend to perceive things in sharper outline. They took the lead, as far back as 1950, in calling for a British-French-American guarantee of current boundaries in the Middle East to forestall an arms race, for which the U.S.S.R. is now primarily responsible. Observers agree that Arab nationalism has Israel for its lone target, supplying the primary reason for the eagerness of the Arab leaders to procure arms. That is one aspect of the question.

The other is that most Arab rulers lack the wholehearted support of their impoverished subjects who are increasingly resentful of their lot. The Arab leaders have little interest in building up their armed forces as a defense against the spread of Communism, but are intent on their own nationalistic aims. The restive masses have even less concern for what we in the United States deem to be the cause of the free world.

Such is the background for the Russian approach, which proffers aid to Arab lands without requiring outright political subservience. The benevolent sort of neutralism which comprises the height of present Russian demands in these countries fits in only too well with the Soviet technique of extending supposedly stringless aid.

Its comparative effectiveness can be gauged from the recent Syrian incident. When the United States made the dramatic and heavily publicized airlift delivery of arms to King Hussein of Jordan to offset Russian deliveries to Syria, most of the Arab leaders were actually displeased. Our staunchest ally there, King Saud, declared that he would oppose the use of force against Syria and insisted that both Syria and Egypt be represented at any Arab "summit meeting" he would attend. The impression is unmistakable that this countermove has lost us ground among the Arabs.

In view of the strategic location of many of these nations and the importance of their oilfields and pipelines for Europe and the West, our Middle East policy deserves a searching scrutiny. One realistic starting point would be a recognition that to become dependable allies the Arab peoples will have to have a far greater and more tangible stake than they have had up to now in remaining outside the Iron Curtain.

TEXTS OF DEMOCRACY

IT WOULD seem unlikely that the classics of American democracy are being read more widely in India than in the United States, but such, apparently, is the case. Working with the United States Information Agency, publishers introduce a series of cheap paperback editions of basic texts in English. Indians were able to buy works of people such as Thoreau, Franklin, Hamilton, Adams, Jefferson and Paine, as well as selections from the

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Federalist Papers and Constitutional documents. They not only bought these but asked for additional texts of English writers.

This project and its evident success should be heartening not only to the publishers, the U.S.I.A., and the group of Chicago citizens who initiated the project, but to all who are interested in furthering democratic principles. Democracy is too difficult to be either easy or safe. In the countries where it exists it is always under attack, and always being tested. There is a constant need, which recent years have only emphasized, to return to the fundamental and classic statements. From these statements the democracies continue to draw sustenance.

It is well that citizens of other countries should be able to read the classic documents of democracy so that the democracies can be judged not only by the accomplishments and failures they display, and the distortions which hostile countries offer, but also by the ideals to which they aspire. We need not underrate the importance of supermarkets to suggest that we have other things to export.

These texts are now in competition in India with the many cheap texts of Marx, Lenin, Engels and Stalin which the Soviet Union has already distributed. This is the kind of competition that will have long-range consequences. The initial project, already successful, well deserves to be expanded. Additional texts, translations into various languages, and distribution to other countries are all being considered and are extensions which should clearly be encouraged.

JOURNAL OF OPINION—OR OPINIONS?

THE COMMONWEAL has always had its devoted supporters and its equally determined critics. Friend and foe alike, however, usually agree on one thing: The Commonweal is an unusual magazine. Unusual in many ways: it is edited by Catholic laymen; it has no foundation or organization to subsidize it; its editors take what is normally described as a liberal point of view on most public questions; the area of interest covered by the description, "A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature and the Arts," is in practice very broad; and, not least unusual, it regularly publishes articles which conflict with the views held by the editors themselves.

There is nothing new in this last-named policy, but we were set to thinking about the matter recently when two contributors to our pages, one liberal and one conservative, separately expressed a certain amount of dismay at a specific example of this fact—each, of course, from his own point of view. Then, as often in the past, we were called on to justify this policy. Do we realize, the question is, that such-and-such an article flatly contradicted our own editorial position? Or, if in another instance there was no flat contradiction, do we realize that the temper and direction of the article were quite different from our own approach? The answer is that we do, and that publishing articles with points of view at variance with our own is part of our policy—carried out, we might say, without our normally feeling any necessity to spell out editorially our disagreement with this or that point.

We are not trying to claim that every magazine should follow our policy in this matter. We can see certain obvious advantages in having a conservative magazine in which a liberal is not allowed to raise his head, or in having a liberal journal in which everything from editorials through articles and book reviews expresses only the liberal point of view. Indeed, from a strictly commercial aspect, we would even imagine that magazines of this nature must benefit by such a policy, if only by promoting the policy of "us" against "them." But we do not conceive of The Commonweal in these terms.

No matter what the advantages of a unified, cover-to-cover, all-conservative or all-liberal magazine may be, we believe more strongly in the value of discussion and the exchange of ideas. We accept the infallibility of the Pope in matters of faith and morals; no matter how we try, however, we are unable to extend that belief to comments by the editors—or, for that matter, by our contributors—on the kinds of questions with which this magazine is concerned. For that reason, as we have pointed out before, while this magazine's editors were being either praised or damned as liberals, The Commonweal has over the years regularly published articles by men commonly counted as conservatives, from Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn and Thomas Molnar to Frederick Wilhelmsen and Russell Kirk.

This policy of presenting different points of view is one we will continue to follow. Perhaps this course will result in occasional confusion among our readers, as well as among our contributors. But The Commonweal does not pretend to be a popular magazine, and it has always been published for a thoughtful readership. We doubt, therefore, that the bafflement over this particular policy is quite as great as some people seem to imagine.

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Catholics and Learning

"WHY IS IT THAT SO MANY CATHOLICS IN AMERICA DO NOT KNOW WHAT SCHOLARSHIP IS OR DO NOT SEEM TO CARE?"

MARTIN J. SVAGLIC

ASSUMING IT IS TRUE, as we have heard from many sources lately, that Catholics are making a disproportionately small contribution to the nation's intellectual life, is there anything one can do to improve the situation? There are those in high places who say no—or at least not in the near future. You cannot turn out scholars on an assembly line, they argue, any more than you can suddenly will into being a living tradition. We are a young church in the United States. Our people have come in large part from underprivileged areas of Europe, and it cannot be expected that they should compete as yet on equal terms with the old New England stock which still tends to dominate the country's intellectual life.

As they acquire greater wealth and leisure, however, and more and more of them attend college, we can reasonably hope that in the time of their children and their children's children, an environment of respect for learning will have been created that cannot fail to produce its share of distinguished scholars. Meanwhile let us be grateful for the scholars already in our midst and for the remarkable progress we have made in setting up against great odds an educational system of such magnitude and promise as we have in the United States.

That this fairly represents a common position on the question of American Catholics and the intellectual life, I think everyone who has followed the discussion will agree. Speaking as a layman who has studied and taught in both Catholic and non-Catholic universities, however, and who would like to think that he has the best interests of Catholic education at heart, I am convinced that such an argument is in a high degree specious and tends to lull its exponents into an unwarranted sense of security.

It ignores, for one thing, the fact that other underprivileged groups, the Jews, for example, have overcome similar or greater handicaps to forge brilliantly ahead in our universities and in the arts (though often, it must be granted, at the expense of their religion). It ignores the history of higher education, which can supply instances of a rapid creation of respect for learning in institutions long sunk in a deeper lethargy than any which can be said to afflict the worst of our Catholic colleges; for example, the Oxford which came to be known in the eighteenth century as "a place of port and prejudice" was intellectually transformed within twenty years by a small band of reformers from Oriel, Balliol, and Christ Church. And if Father Gustave Weigel's mordant sketch of a common type of Catholic educator (*Review of Politics:* July 1957) has a real basis it is an argument which rests on the precarious assumption that mediocrity or worse can one day beget excellence. This is something which rarely happens even in the natural world; and as Chesterton liked to say about similar long-run arguments, in the long run we shall all be dead.

Why it is that so many Catholics in America do not know what scholarship is, as Father Weigel has charged, or do not seem to care, is a question that can only be resolved, perhaps, in the ultimates of theological training and ecclesiastical history. There have long been, and I suppose there always will be, Catholic educators who believe that since the things of the intellect are much less important, *sub specie aeternitatis,* than those more obviously connected with the moral life (about which we already know the truth anyhow), there is not much point in getting too concerned with the former. Their consequent indifference to mental development, which is the perversion of a fundamental truth, easily communicates itself to many of their students. In the modern world, furthermore, with the possible exception of France, it is the spirit of Pius IX rather than of Leo XIII which has held the more continuous sway; and it may be that Catholics in the United States represent a peculiar blend of that spirit at its most defensive with some of the less attractive features of American materialism and of the political and cultural temper of the Skeffingtons.

BE THAT AS it may, however, I should like to concern myself in this essay with more proximate explanations for our unimpressive intellectual performance, and to suggest certain measures which

Mr. Svaglic, who has contributed to *PMLA, Poetry, Renascence,* and other journals, is a member of the faculty of Loyola University, Chicago.

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am confident would help to foster here and now in our colleges an environment of greater respect for learning, without which we are not likely to make any real progress. What I have to say is based on discussions with many teachers and students, as well as on my own experience; and the suggestions offered are likewise a product of various sources, there being no implication that our administrators have never thought of them before or even in some cases put a few of them into practice.

There are those who hold that since a person's habits and outlook are formed quite early in life, it is to such agencies as the parish, the secondary schools, and the diocesan Catholic press that we must first direct our attention. Even if the familiar, dispiriting accounts of the secondary schools are true and at all typical, however, the surest way to improve the situation is to train the future teachers properly on the college and university levels. Since mental development is slower than physical or emotional, their minds should still be plastic and curious at eighteen; and the influence of their subsequent training will later permeate all the other areas of Catholic activity.

One might discuss the problem of creating an environment of greater respect for learning within our colleges from three aspects: *i.e.,* as touching administration, the students themselves, and the faculty. It is axiomatic that, as surveys have shown, good scholars come normally from good colleges. If, then, in Catholic America we have relatively few good scholars, it may be that we have few good or at least first-rate colleges. That this is still the opinion of the non-Catholic academic world seems clear from a recent survey conducted by the *Chicago Tribune* of the top colleges and universities in the United States. Some thirty-three prominent educators (none from Catholic schools, which is inexcusable but yet suggestive) were asked to list what they considered the best institutions of higher learning in this country, each consultant excepting his own school to avoid prejudice. Of the forty colleges and universities of all sizes and types which they ranked highest in their class, not one was a Catholic institution, nor were any of the runners-up. Such surveys are always imperfect in one way or another, of course, but it might be better for us to ponder the implications of this one than to attempt at once to refute it. Why have we apparently not a single college that non-Catholic educators rate as high as Carleton, say, or Oberlin, or Hamilton, or Smith? And what can we do about it?

One reason, I think, is that we have spread our resources too thin. A Catholic college in virtually every diocese of any size may be a laudable ambition, but it can be realized in the near future only by encouraging mediocrity or worse, as there is simply not enough money nor are there enough qualified Catholic teachers available to produce better than that. In some of the richer and more populous dioceses, almost every religious order concerned with education seems bent on opening a college of its own, administratively and culturally sealed off from its neighbors.

A person can hardly keep track now of the Catholic colleges in the Chicago-Milwaukee area, for example—and yet another one is reported in the making. The two Catholic universities in Chicago, far from being the monolithic entity suspected by some liberals, have little intellectual communication with one another and in some areas needlessly duplicate each other's resources. Is there really a justification, one cannot help wondering, for two Catholic law schools in the same city? Or two Catholic graduate schools in the arts and sciences? Honestly recognizing our own limitations, is it not likely that one or both must suffer from the duplication involved?

SINCE THERE are important advantages to a small liberal arts college, and yet clear limitations as well, it would seem that one good way to derive greater benefit from the talents we do possess, to avoid the wasteful duplication of resources and the lowering of educational standards that a proliferation of schools generally abets, is to federate the colleges of a given area into a regional Catholic university whose task it would be to maintain standards and to develop a liaison between the various colleges: *i.e.,* a system somewhat like that of Toronto or Oxford.

The university could be governed by the heads of the colleges. It would maintain standards by administering common examinations in the key basic subjects as well as final examinations for the degree sought. It would permit students to take courses in any of the colleges for a good reason, so that if a certain school had a distinguished professor of history, for instance, a student majoring in history at a nearby Catholic college would be encouraged to take his courses for credit. (The competition involved might spur all the other professors as well.)

On the graduate level it would encourage one branch of the university to specialize in the humanities, another in the physical sciences, and so on. It would permit students to use the library facilities of the other colleges and so make unnecessary the duplicating of costlier and less frequently used acquisitions. And from a common fund it would periodically engage for special courses open to all (but given now in one school, now in another) specialists of national renown in all fields whose services no one college might otherwise be able to afford. Gilson's *God and Philosophy* and *The Unity of Philosophical Experience,* one recalls, were originally special courses of lectures at Indiana and Harvard, respectively.

Such a proposal may seem utopian to those who dread the red tape involved or who fear that it would

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be about as easy to create a world state as to persuade religious orders to surrender any real measures of their virtual autonomy. A less difficult alternative (though it could also operate simultaneously with the first plan) would be the conversion of four or five schools across the country into colleges designed for students in the top twenty-five per cent of their high school classes and staffed by the best teachers the order in charge could supply from its own ranks as well as by the best laymen it could obtain with the inducement of higher salaries and better working conditions than those available in Catholic schools elsewhere. Admittedly these would be schools catering to an intellectual elite, and the fees might have to be relatively high; but surely we are beyond the stage of thinking such a proposal undemocratic. The democratic fallacy in education has done us too much harm already, since by and large Catholic schools have long been catering to a student body almost as heterogeneous as that of most state schools, with the result that standards tend likewise to be moderately low, the best students often remaining unchallenged. In a few of our schools, at least, let us be democratic as Harvard or Chicago or California is democratic and not otherwise; and from such an environment leaders and scholars will almost certainly arise. As of now, it is difficult to consider any of our better-known colleges (with the possible exception of two or three girls' schools) as markedly superior to the others, much less as an approximation to the ideal.

EVEN UNDER our present system, however, much can be done to improve the quality of the training offered and to foster in our students a greater zeal for learning. For one thing, every college could offer to gifted students a special program throughout their four years of residence. At Loyola in Chicago, for example, for their first two years of more general education, the best students are put in special sections. In their junior year, if they have maintained a high average heretofore, they are encouraged to begin a two-year program of intensive work in their field of specialization in addition to the regular courses required for a major in their subject.

In English, for instance, there are usually four or five upperclassmen doing wide and systematic reading in poetry, drama, fiction, and criticism under the supervision of a tutor whom they meet once a week for informal discussion and the presentation of written reports. Similar programs are offered in the other branches of the humanities and analogous ones in the sciences. It is a relatively expensive program for the university to operate, since the various tutors must have their teaching schedules reduced if they are to give to it the kind of energy it demands. In several departments, however, despite admitted imperfections in the program, the results have been decidedly encouraging. By the time these special students are ready for the public oral examination which rather excitingly crowns their undergraduate career, they have a wider and more systematic grasp of their subject than the average M.A. Their scores on the Graduate Record Examination, administered throughout the country in all types of schools, have been unfailingly and remarkably high. Best of all, a fair percentage of them enter the field of education and do very well in the various graduate schools they attend. We expect to hear more from these students in the future.

There are many less elaborate services than an honors program that should also be provided in our schools. Since it is by the contagion of personal influence and example that men are commonly drawn into any walk of life, it is very important that students be given frequent opportunities to hear and even to meet the country's leading scholars and artists in various fields. Few of our colleges can afford to hire these people for even a semester, but there is no reason why they should not be invited to our schools occasionally for lectures, concerts, symposiums, commencement speeches, honorary degrees, and receptions.

Nor is there any valid reason why the invitations should be confined largely to Catholics, as has usually been the case in the past. In general Catholic schools have done poorly in this regard up to now, often truly pleading a lack of funds. One anomalous result, however, is that even outstanding Catholic thinkers like Gilson and Maritain are better known personally in secular universities than in Catholic; and many of the country's greatest scholars have never set foot in a Catholic school. Can anyone believe that this is a healthy situation intellectually?

The principle of competition has long been familiar to Catholic education—witness the oratorical, English, Latin and other contests so familiar in Jesuit schools. It is commonly agreed, however, that we do not compete enough with students from secular schools for the academic plums that demand a wider reach: Rhodes scholarships, Fulbright grants, and so on. One way to correct our deficiency is to appoint a board in every college whose task it would be to keep track of the many grants available and to urge the most promising students to compete for them. Another and most im-

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portant stimulus to a life of learning would come from the establishment in more of our colleges of chapters of the really significant honor societies like Phi Beta Kappa. To the best of my knowledge, there are only two Catholic schools that now have a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, and these are of recent establishment. If more of our schools cannot qualify for a charter, we ought to know why. That a certain bias against Catholic schools permeates some of our educational foundations and societies, no one who has been exposed for any length of time to the liberal temper would be naive enough to deny; but perhaps some of it, at least, has been deserved.

IT IS THE regular faculty, of course, whose influence is paramount. No matter how elaborate the physical plant you provide for students, no matter how many collateral advantages you offer them, if the majority of instructors whom they meet every day are not themselves men of a still inquiring mind, actively engaged in exposing or extending the area of their own specialization, respecting one another and respected by the administration for doing their job, you will turn out not men of learning, much less intellectual leaders, but stolid bourgeois Catholics at best (good professional men, perhaps)—cynics, skeptics, and rebels at worst. And here especially the old maxim will apply: *corruptio optimi pessima.*

The administration can do its part in the obvious ways. They are very important though I do not intend to dwell on them here as there is evidence that conditions are improving. Teaching salaries must be made competitive with those of the good secular colleges if we are to keep qualified teachers and attract gifted young people to the profession. As it is, many Catholic colleges pay low salaries, pleading that they cannot afford anything better. What they are really saying is that they cannot afford a good school. For though it is far less true in education than in other professions all teachers, lay as well as clerical, subsidize their students), it is at least relatively true that here, too, you get what you pay for; and students, who are quick to ferret out these things, are not likely to respect a mere drudge. A good faculty alone can maintain and enhance the reputation of a school, attract promising students, and win it regular awards and endowments from business, the great foundations, and men of wealth.

The faculty must also be given incentives to scholarship: for example, pleasant working conditions, appropriate schedules, sabbatical leaves for those actively engaged in scholarly pursuits, merit increases for publication, scientific achievement, etc. As of now, these things are somewhat rare in Catholic colleges, the working conditions being often primitive, schedules heavy, sabbatical leaves non-existent, and salary increases "across the board" or nearly so, the more and the less productive being almost equally rewarded and the spread between the salaries of the higher and lower ranks of the faculty rather slight.

Conversely, administrators often err by being too kind: *i.e.,* by retaining unpromising instructors so long that they acquire virtual tenure and then prove mere deadwood. The primary work of the young teacher is learning to teach. It is a fair rule of thumb, however, that if a young man has taught a certain course for seven years or so without ever feeling compelled to express himself in print on the subject, either to his colleagues or to a larger public, he has sunk into a rut and, for his own sake and that of the college, should be encouraged to change his school or even his profession while there is still time.

So far I have been talking about what Carlyle would have called the mechanics of our situation; but these things, of course, are less significant than its dynamics. Administrators can certainly improve the first, and I believe they are working hard to do so; but the second is a thornier inward problem, partly a corporate and partly an individual matter, like the attainment of virtue. Our enemies persist in saying that there is something intrinsic to Catholicism (dogmatism, book-burning, heresy-hunting are some of the terms they apply to it) which is hostile to scholarship. As Bernard Shaw put it, "A Catholic university is a contradiction in terms."

We know from the long history of the Church and from the presence in her now as ever of many distinguished scholars that this is certainly not true. And yet one can hardly suppose that any such opinion would have become so common if there were not a measure of truth to it, however distorted it may be. Scholars beget scholars. Everything depends ultimately on how material is presented to students. If it is presented as part of a well-rounded and fair-minded inquiry whose conclusions are open to modification or correction (except for those very few things in faith and morals which have passed the stage of inquiry and are now doctrinally defined), certain students will join the teacher in the labor of learning, which is scholarship.

If it is presented, as if to children, with the chilling finality of the closed mind, it will generate chiefly bigotry and, by natural reaction in the more perceptive students, skepticism. My own experience has been that in the humanities, at any rate, when they are not merely indifferent, Catholic educators are too often rhetoricians rather than inquirers, their principal concern being to prove that whatever is new in modern thought is either not true, not important, or not really new after all, having long since been anticipated by some Catholic thinkers. Frequently they are right, of course; but when the material cannot be treated in this fashion,

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they are not interested and they never therefore add to our knowledge or fire their students with a desire to do so.

INDIFFERENCE, then, and what Father Weigel termed a defensive rather than a scholarly mentality seem the chief obstacles to American Catholic intellectual productivity. To find a cure, however, is not so easy as to describe the ailment. That our Catholic universities even now give a better education than many state and private schools, I would certainly not deny. But if they are to become as intellectually active and stimulating as their better secular counterparts (that they are not so now is a matter of simple observation), a more critical spirit must be fostered among our teachers and our students and not confused with disaffection or disloyalty. College students may be at a difficult stage of life, but they are surely more like adults than like children and should be treated accordingly.

A university is not a seminary, any more than a good priest need be a learned man; but if a teacher or administrator has had only a seminary education himself, he may lose sight of this distinction and find it hard to sympathize with the inquiring, dialectical temper of the scholar. This, I think, has often been the case with us in the past and helps to explain the silence, if not even the acquiescence, of many of our university personnel when faced with the bad art, bad architecture, ill-conceived demonstrations of loyalty or opposition, embarrassing awards to inferior books and motion pictures, and similar manifestations of Catholic activity in America presented to us in the admiring reports of a largely uncritical Catholic press. The obedience and docility that are properly expected in a seminary mean the death of scholarship when transplanted to a university. As yet our Catholic universities cannot be said to lead Catholic life in the United States, even in those very areas where educated opinion should carry the most weight.

Though I will not say the fault is wholly ours, as the secular mind has failings of its own, we have too long cut ourselves off from the great non-Catholic universities and from our colleagues therein, whose influence could be so invigorating and to whom we in turn should have something of value to contribute. Too often we have addressed only Catholic audiences or contributed only to Catholic journals. We are often so inbred that it is hard for us to see ourselves as others see us; and thus we are merely bewildered when they show hostility to us and cannot frame a reply to them in terms they will understand.

Laymen are often asked by their colleagues in secular universities why they teach in Catholic colleges. Because in a Catholic community, I for one should answer, there is something like love; and this is rather an exotic plant in the academic world. Because the failings of Catholics do not prove the wisdom of eclecticism in education, much less that of any of the known varieties of Protestantism. Because there are always some people on our faculties who are quite as competent as one can expect to find anywhere else; and on occasion one comes across a combination of learning and sanctity uniquely compelling in its effect. And because there are good reasons for optimism about the future, though on these I shall not touch, as we have a long way to go, and humility will take us further than a self-satisfaction bordering on arrogance.

UNIQUE PROBLEMS

The Church in East Germany

H. A. WIGBOLD

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH in East Germany has less liberty than the Church in Poland but more than the Church in Hungary. Bishops there have not been arrested, and only one priest has been convicted for alleged conspiracy. But government and party (the S.E.D. is even more Stalinist than the Czech Communist Party) are opposing the Church with every means short of open persecution.

Furthermore, the Church in East Germany is up against some technical difficulties the Church in the other satellite countries is not. For one thing, Catholics here live in a diaspora and have a crying shortage of priests to take care of an almost doubled number of Catholics compared with 1945. Before 1945 the Church in the present territory of East Germany without Berlin, had seven hundred thousand adherents but by 1945 this number had increased to one and a half million. Hundreds of thousands from East Prussia

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and the territories behind the rivers Oder and Neisse, that came under Polish rule, have fled into East Germany.

The frontier zone crosses the dioceses of Paderborn, Osnabruck, Fulda and Würzburg, where many churches had been destroyed in the last days of the war. A relatively high percentage of the priests were over sixty-five, and into this already very difficult situation came the constant pressure of the new regime. The Communists went forward very cautiously, however. In 1946 and 1947 Catholic priests were still active in the central committee of the F.D.J., the state youth organization, and the presidium of the *Kulturbund* and the *Volkssolidaritaet*. But step by step the Christian influence was liquidated. The Communist attacks were not, as in the other East European countries, primarily directed at the Catholic Church, for the Protestant Evangelical church far exceeds the Catholic Church in strength, and the Communists, always very sensible for numbers and power, understood they had to attack both.

The Communist plan in regard to religion is easy to see. More difficult to see, however, is the detailed execution of the plan. For the offensive against the churches is largely influenced by a number of unpredictable circumstances: the economic situation, the atmosphere within the Soviet orbit, the psychological resistance of the population, etc. These have been the official attitudes in East Germany: 1945-1947, friendly relations; 1947-1952, continuous limitation; 1952-1953, sharp measures; 1953 (after the July revolt in East Berlin), easing restrictions; 1954, again limitation; 1954-1956, status quo; and now the beginning of new attacks.

THE STRUGGLE now is mainly concentrated on religious instruction, the building of churches and the so-called youth inauguration. On the ground of Article 44 of the East German Constitution the churches have the right to give religious instruction, but there is a clear tendency always to select the most unfavorable hours and, on the part of the secondary schools, to suppress it entirely. The recent difficulties in Poland about religious instruction, after the treaty between Cardinal Wyszynski and Gomulka, will undoubtedly worsen the situation.

For over a year the East German authorities have systematically refused to sell sites on which to build churches. If a church already has a site, it is impossible to get a building permit, and if the permit has already been granted, the supply of materials stops, and if the materials have been bought in the past, there is no labor. In several towns there are half-built churches rotting away in the rain. This is not open persecution, but it is an effective way to hamper religion, particularly in a country where the population has been doubled and many churches have been destroyed.

Propaganda for the youth inauguration, which has lessened in the last year, is expected to be pressed forward after the re-Stalinization. East German youths have been summoned to devote themselves to the Communist state. The formula here is a clear Marxist one and so is the course of study offered the young people. Some time ago the *Deutsche Lehrerzeitung* published the course plan. In Chapter Three the leaders get the following advice: "In this hour the origin of mankind has to be explained and all mythological ideas have to be cleared up." All the young men and women taking part in the inauguration get the book *Weltall-Erde-Mensch*. On page nine of this book Robert Haveman writes: "As the last of the mythologies the God of the monotheistic religion still stands but he is nothing else than the naive personification of the laws of man's life he has not yet discovered."

Against the continuous torrent of Communist propaganda the Church has only two ecclesiastical papers: *Tag des Herren* and *St. Hedwigsblatt*. The Benno publishing firm in Leipzig also publishes religious books, and does an excellent job, but the paper allotments are insufficient to meet the demand for religious reading. Books may deal with religious matters only and have to pass the censor. And while there is no preventive censorship for the ecclesiastical papers, the authorities have another effective way of control: the Postministry dispatches them only when it has seen the contents. Criticizing government policy or commenting on the persecution in other satellite countries is impossible. Only in very rare exceptions (as with the youth inauguration) is the view of the Episcopate printed. The need for religious books is the more urgently felt as there is a desperate need for more priests. It is true that since 1952 we have had one seminary functioning in Erfurt and two priest institutes in Neuzelle and Halberstadt, and that the Bishops appoint the teachers and lay down the curriculum independently. But the aid of the West German dioceses is painfully missed. Since 1951 the Communist authorities have refused to permit priests of West German seminaries to work in East Germany. After the July revolt in 1953 this regulation was revoked, but it is once again being rigorously enforced.

East Germany does not have the so-called "progressive" priests, but a curious political phenomenon: the C.D.U., under Vice-premier Otto Nuschke, the only Christian Democratic party behind the Iron Curtain. The East Germans bitterly call it "the slave of the slaves" because the C.D.U. always follows the line of the East German Communist Party. The C.D.U. has no real influence either with the Catholics or the Communists. The unbloody revolution in Poland even increased its difficulties. For lack of popular support

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the C.D.U. leaned heavily on the Polish "progressive" Catholics, the Pax group, the Patriotic Priests and the Committee of Intellectuals and Peace-fighters. Now that the Polish "progressive" Catholics are partly ruled out and have partly submitted to the hierarchy, the East German Communists are the only support for the C.D.U.

MORE IMPORTANT is the question of the youth. The *Jugend-seelsorge* (youth spiritual care) has become one of the most important activities in East Germany. Though any non-religious activity is forbidden, the interest in the work is great. Special pilgrimages for the youth attract tens of thousands, as in Poland during the Stalinist regime. One should not underestimate the temptation of the Communist regime for the East German youth. In no country have the Communists made such tremendous efforts to win the youth, probably because they knew that they could not capture the minds of the older people. Of the six hundred delegates to the Parliament, one hundred and fifty are under thirty. The same can be said of the managers of the state factories, as well as the mayors of important cities. (In 1951 the mayor of Leipzig was twenty-six years old.) The Communists were willing to risk a partial collapse of the bureaucracy in order to win the youth. Yet all these efforts have failed. As in all the other Communist states, the youth is one of the most rebellious groups and only the twenty Soviet divisions in East Germany prevent them from open rebellion. Very few young men and women took part in the youth inauguration in spite of all the pressure of a dictatorial regime. They look . . . and fly to the West. One should not forget in the discussions about the Hungarian refugees that every day six to eight hundred East Germans go westward. Forty per cent are under twenty-five and this percentage increased to fifty per cent after the bloody repression of the Hungarian revolt.

But this is at the same time one of the most difficult problems of the Church. For it is the best part of the youth that cannot bear to endure the oppression of the regime. An East German priest I met in Berlin told me that three years ago he had a very active group of thirty boys and girls. In the course of the three years twenty-nine of them have fled.

But he was not without hope. On the contrary, he was in a rather aggressive mood. "You worry about the consequences of Communism for religious life. Let me say we sometimes worry about the consequences of all your 'economic miracles,' all your talking about prosperity, for *your* religious life. Until now we have succeeded in preserving the Faith among Catholics. That is not very much for a Church that has to speak its words to the whole world, but can you say the same? You have Christian organizations and institutions, but are you sure that you have the Christians too?"

LABORS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Dom Virgil Michel

FRANCIS E. McMAHON

VIRGIL MICHEL, O.S.B., (1890-1938) was unquestionably an extraordinary character. Almost nineteen years have passed since his death. Yet his influence persists in a multiplicity of ways. The man's active career was short, but endowed as he was with immense energy and a spirit of supreme dedication, he accomplished more than a dozen other men enjoying a normal life span.

Who he was, and what he did, are related in the scholarly *Virgil Michel and the Liturgical Movement* (Liturgical Press. $5.) by a confrere, Paul B. Marx, O.S.B. It is an admirable work, whose only major weakness is that it becomes at times too repetitious. As the title indicates, the focus of the book is upon Dom Virgil's contribution to the liturgical movement. But the liturgy, though at the center of Dom Virgil's vision, by no means wholly absorbed him. His versatile self reached out into numerous other fields. The book surveys these other achievements, although it pretends to no exhaustive account of them. The whole work adds up to an authentic and inspiring picture of a personality which burned itself out trying to awaken American Catholics to the full implications of their Faith.

What forces, inner and outer, mold the character of a man like Virgil Michel? This book does not reveal the full answer. Perhaps no book could. As a boy he was studious and active, with a lively curiosity about things. But he was not regarded as particularly brilliant. As a newly ordained monk of St. John's Abbey of Collegeville, Minnesota, he began graduate work at the Catholic University of America

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in 1916. He obtained his doctorate two years later, writing on the aesthetic principles of Orestes A. Brownson. It was Brownson's writings—apparently more than the lectures of his professors—that helped set him ablaze for reform. Brownson had criticized the Scholastic philosophers for not meeting the problem of the age. Dom Virgil read and agreed. The criticism confirmed his own observations. Henceforth, one of his major efforts was to rescue Scholasticism from the professional embalmers.

A sojourn in Europe (1924-25) enlarged his interests and suggested new challenges. Rome was his first stop, for study under a distinguished Thomist. He was disillusioned. Here was another professor of Thomism not coming to grips with contemporary problems. Then on to Louvain, where he found a more satisfactory philosophical climate. It was in Belgium, also, that he met the renowned liturgical scholar, Dom Lambert Beauduin of the Abbey of Mont César. The vast world of the liturgy now began opening to him. Without neglecting philosophy, which was still his primary interest, he plunged into a thorough study of the liturgical movement in Europe.

He traveled wherever he could, and he sought out people in every walk of life, insatiably curious about everything. Observing the unhealthy gulf between clergy and laity in Europe, he resolved that upon his return to America, he would remain close to the laity, co-operating with them in every way. He visited Spain. The appalling economic conditions of that country, and the wide gap he found there between the rich and the poor, persuaded him that serious trouble was brewing. The misery of the underprivileged tempted him in the direction of radical socialism. Dom Virgil's social consciousness was maturing.

The scope of his future apostolate was really established when he bade farewell to Europe late in 1925. To bring American Thomism into contact with the streams of contemporary thought; to promote a widespread knowledge of, and appreciation for, the liturgy of the Church; to stimulate a greater interest in the problems of social and economic reform—these were the objectives which his studies and travels had given him. There was a fourth objective, necessarily implied in the others: a radical reform of Catholic education, if the laity were to become informed and effective workers in the Christian apostolate.

THE AMERICA to which Dom Virgil returned was aglow with a superficial prosperity. But he saw that behind the appearances of material well-being and general euphoria was a corroding spirit of individualism and materialism which had affected even large numbers of American Catholics. The universal malady—it was not confined to America alone—could be successfully combated only by a renewal of the

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Christian spirit. And the foremost source of the Christian spirit, said the Collegeville monk—he was echoing the words of Pope Pius X—was the liturgy of the Church.

Misunderstanding about the nature and significance of the liturgy was widespread in the United States. Many identified it with rubrics and the wearing of Gothic vestments. Relatively few grasped the fact that the liturgy was central in the life of the Church, that the public, official worship of the Church—the *leitourgia* as the Greeks called it—was the divinely-inspired means for the glorification of God and the spiritual perfection of man. The paramount role, moreover, that liturgical life had played in the formation of Western culture had been all but forgotten—if it was ever known. The liturgy had molded the basic traditions of the West, said Dom Virgil. It can, in the present age, restore the purity of those traditions, and dissolve the prevailing secularism and paganism. The historical point he was making was later to be given scholarly emphasis by Christopher Dawson's Gifford Lectures on *Religion and the Rise of Western Culture*.

Although Dom Virgil did not initiate American interest in the liturgical movement—there were others in the field before him—he was chiefly responsible for the movement's achieving an organized character in this country. He founded the Liturgical Press and the Popular Liturgical Library at St. John's. In 1926, the first number of *Orate Fratres* (now *Worship*) appeared. It was to become the leading organ of the movement in the English-speaking world. The board of associate editors of the publication, comprising both clerical and lay scholars, was drawn from three countries.

It was not always smooth sailing for the liturgists. A few seminaries banned the reading of *Orate Fratres* when it was first published. Dom Virgil was denied access to the pages of some leading ecclesiastical magazines to explain the movement. After the annual National Liturgical Week was established, reportedly it was characterized by some of the clergy in the East as "a meeting of a bunch of Germans out in the Midwest."

The movement, however, slowly gained strength. In addition to editing the magazine, Dom Virgil sought to advance liturgical ideals through the media of books, articles and pamphlets. He lectured extensively, and his correspondence was heavy. He did not regard himself as engaged in a one-man crusade. He construed his mission primarily as one of inspiring and encouraging others. And true to an earlier resolve, he sought not only to awaken the clergy, but to arouse interest among the laity. Again and again he insisted that the laity were called to be active participants in the liturgical life, not passive and uninformed spectators of a religious rite.

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SIMULTANEOUSLY, Dom Virgil was active on other fronts. Though lacking a specialist's knowledge of economics and sociology, he did have an unusual grasp of the philosophical principles underlying a healthy social order. During the economic crisis of the thirties, he wrote prolifically on the basic causes of, and remedies for, the debacle of Capitalism. His primary guides were the papal encyclicals and the social philosophy of Thomas Aquinas, although he was also influenced by the Personalism of Emmanuel Mounier and the Distributism of Chesterton and Belloc. He sought, in his writings, to clarify such key concepts of social and economic life as "capitalism," "person," "human rights," "labor," "property," "common good," and "social justice." Although he advocated a corporative order that would avoid the extremes of individualism and collectivism, Dom Virgil abstained from offering a blueprint for reconstruction of a disordered world. Such a project was beyond his province. His aim was to arouse the apathetic, to promote discussion, to inject more precision in the use of fundamental terms, and to suggest general lines of reform.

He disapproved of the view that Catholics should think alike on all matters so as to present a "United Front." Self-criticism, he declared, was one of the signs of true vitality. The habit of viewing matters in terms of "black or white"—it was a weakness he recognized in others besides Catholics—also drew his censure. As an example, he adduced the attitude of many Catholics during the Spanish Civil War: Since Franco was Catholic, he could not possibly do any wrong; the other side must be wholly at fault. Dom Virgil did not succumb to the view that Franco was the crusader on the white horse.

His social program was intimately fused with his liturgical ideals. It was precisely here, according to his biographer, that he did his most original thinking. The liturgical life, Dom Virgil asserted, is deficient if it does not fructify into a zeal for social reform. Conversely, social programs that disregarded the liturgy are doomed to ineffectiveness. These were important insights into a vital relationship. He was critical of men like the late Monsignor John A. Ryan for not emphasizing the spiritual factor in their programs of social reconstruction. Here the Benedictine monk may have been overdoing things a bit, for Monsignor Ryan never lost sight of the fact that Christian charity was indispensable for a sound social order. If he had little to say about the liturgy as such, it was primarily because his thought had matured long before the liturgical movement in America had been born.

A few words, finally, must be said about Father Michel's work in the field of philosophy. He had hoped that, once the liturgical movement was launched, he could concentrate upon philosophical research and writing. But there was none to take his place as

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editor of *Orate Fratres*. He was forced, regretfully, to make philosophy a secondary concern. It is remarkable, under the circumstances, that he contributed so much. He addressed philosophical congresses, both Catholic and secular; he published numerous articles and book reviews in leading philosophical journals; he began, though he could not complete, a series of textbooks that would introduce students to a "living Thomism," instead of the archaic thing they were accustomed to meet in the classroom. As a philosopher his thought, while not epoch-making, was of a stimulating character. He was strong in social philosophy, less strong in some of the other philosophical disciplines. In one respect, he was far ahead of most Catholic philosophers: he insisted that the Thomists, if they were to have any influence in the modern world, must stop burying their heads in the sand, and confront contemporary thought in the open field.

No wonder the man died of exhaustion before reaching his fiftieth year. His labors were truly herculean, his accomplishments no less so. The Catholic laity have a particular reason for remembering this man. Dom Virgil understood the laity. He encouraged laymen and laywomen, and he co-operated with them. If the Christian lay apostolate ever sweeps America like a mighty wind, it will be owing to such men as Dom Virgil Michel.

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THE SCREEN

THE BIOGRAPHY BIT

ENTERTAINERS AND JOURNALISTS, who have been quick to razz the advertising boys for their ball-bouncing lingo, deserve a little kidding themselves these days for their over-use of the word "bit." Their patter is full of the acting bit, writing bit, political bit, drama bit or whatever bit. To them I dedicate this report on the biography bit, views of three movies which are based (but only a little bit) on the stories of well-known entertainers. "Jeanne Eagels," purporting to be the biography of the popular actress of the twenties, frankly admits in its foreword: "All events in this photoplay are based on fact and fiction."

"Jeanne Eagels" is not a pleasant picture as it follows a career from bathing beauty to kootch dancer in a carnival to hard-working and scheming star on Broadway. Behind Jeanne's tremendous success as Sadie Thompson in "Rain" is the story of her stealing the role and the play from a less fortunate, drink-sotted actress who finally committed suicide. The picture plods wearily on with the grim details in Jeanne's unhappy life: her overpowering ambition, her drinking, her rows with Equity (resulting in an eighteen-months suspension), her addiction to drugs, her death. I'm not sure why producer-director George Sidney made this movie—unless as a commentary on a wasted talent, and a not-too-great talent at that. Nor am I sure that even a great actress playing Jeanne could have sold us on this story. Kim Novak looks beautiful in the role but only skims the surface; and the men surrounding her are not a great help: Jeff Chandler as the amusement park proprietor whose devotion continues through the years; Charles Drake as the football player she married and divorced; Larry Gates as a theatrical producer with amazing patience. As a dramatic coach, Agnes Moorehead lends authenticity to the proceedings; but no matter how you slice it or name it the Jeanne Eagels bit is not very good.

IN TELLING "The Helen Morgan Story," its raft of script writers wander so far from the facts that one wonders why they bothered to connect this movie to the famed singer of the Prohibition Era. What Producer Martin Rackin and Director Michael Curtiz have done, however, is to give us an interesting musical-melodrama about the twenties, during which Helen Morgan suffered and sang through tears. Looking remarkably like Helen Morgan, Ann Blyth plays the sad, sad girl who rises via the hard road of speakeasy singer and beauty contest winner to the big time in a New York nightclub and on the stage. The two main

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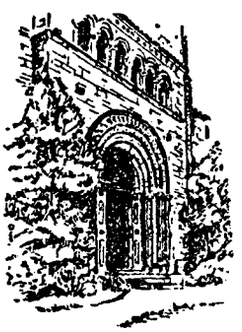

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men in her unhappy life are played by Paul Newman as a self-centered bootlegger-gangster and Richard Carlson as an attorney who is devoted to Helen but whose wife won't give him a divorce. The story also manages to bring in various people of the period who give it a shot of realism: Rudy Vallee, looking and singing young, as himself; Walter Winchell, talking fast and young, as himself; Walter Woolf King as Ziegfeld, who had a stroke of genius when he cast the Morgan as Julie in "Show Boat"; and others who add appropriate touches to this tear-jerking tale of the Jazz Age.

Although most of the movie is pure hokum about this luckless girl, whom fate and Paul Newman treated so badly and who burned her candle at both ends and then turned to drinking when it didn't give a lovely light, it makes little pretense at being much more than it is. Miss Blyth plays the role with a certain dignity and is quite convincing sitting on top of a piano seeming to sing her heart-breaking numbers. The songs, exceedingly well-sung by Gogi Grant, include such Morgan hits as "The Man I Love," "Sunny Side of the Street," "Bill" and others that will fill oldsters with nostalgia. And there won't be a dry eye in the house when Blyth-Grant give out with "Can't Help Lovin' That Man."

COMING to more modern times, there is "The Joker Is Wild," which tells the story of Joe E. Lewis, the nightclub comedian. Full well might you wonder as you watch this film why Joe E. Lewis was made the subject of such a long and seemingless pointless movie. He started out as a speakeasy singer in Chicago in the thirties; but when some thugs cut his throat and scarred his face, he had to turn to burlesque for work and from there he graduated with his line of patter about his drinking and race-track activities to the nightclub platform.

Perhaps this movie with its embittered and unloving main character and laugh-clown-laugh theme was chosen mainly as a vehicle for Frank Sinatra, who plays the lead exceedingly well. But good as he is in both singing and acting as this unhappy entertainer even Sinatra gets somewhat tiresome; and the audience longs for a change of pace from the repetitious jokes and their disgruntled teller. The supporting cast is good: Eddie Albert as a devoted friend and piano player; Jeanne Crain as the society girl who loves Joe through the years but finally gets tired of waiting Jackie Coogan as another friend always there in a pinch; Beverly Garland as Albert's wife and less enthusiastic follower of Joe; and, best of all, Mitzi Gaynor as Martha Stewart, the showgirl Joe finally marries. But this is more of a joke than a marriage and she, like everyone else, leaves the lonely comedian Part of the picture's trouble is in Charles Vidor's slow

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direction and in his holding each scene too long—even after the point is made. And of course much of the picture's trouble is in its lack of plot and shallow main character. The plot is summed up in one scene near the finale. Lewis is drunk and his friend suggests that he not do the show. Sadly Lewis asks, "What would I do instead?" The Joe E. Lewis bit is just a bit too long.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

COMMUNICATIONS

"SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION"

New York, N.Y.

TO the Editors: Father Fichter's article on the Sociology of Religion [Sept. 6] contains much that is commendable and a great deal that deserves continual reiteration for the clarification of the Catholic reading public in this country. However, there are several points to which I must take the sharpest exception. I regret having to do this, for most of what he says is quite fine, but since this is not the first time that Father Fichter has left his public statements open to a kind of interpretation quite deleterious to the field of the sociology of religion, I feel it extremely important to comment.

It appears that Father Fichter is not too well informed about the work being done by other Catholics in the field in this country. While his own work has certainly achieved the most public attention, it actually represents but one aspect of the field itself. In view of this fact, which I imagine he would not deny, Father Fichter should resist the temptation to see the field entirely in his own image. This is especially the case since he does not seem to show any readily discernible effects of the tremendous amount of interdisciplinary discussion and work among sociologists, anthropologists and psychologists in the last decade and a half, not to mention the tentative efforts in this direction with historians as shown in SSRC Bulletin No. 84. Moreover, a sociologist reading the article in question will easily perceive that the author, despite protestations to the contrary, does not wholly escape from relegating sociology to a position ancillary to administration. The granting of a limited autonomy to the field within his rather overstructured intellectual universe does not even approach, let alone offer, a solution to any of the real problems—problems which require an intelligent dialogue with theologians and scholars in the humanities.

The impression that Father Fichter is the only Catholic worker seriously engaged in the field is most unfortunate and is based in part upon his own re-

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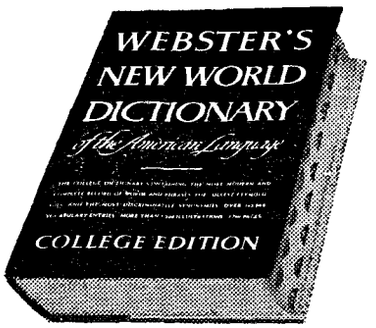

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stricted understanding of the scope of the field itself. A few facts—available to all aware of sociology among Catholics in this country—deserve citation, for there has been some work of considerable achievement. First of all, here at Fordham, the work of Frank A. Santopolo on the role of the priest, of Fathers Scheuer and Schuyler on the parish, and of the anthropologist Father Ewing and his Missionary Institute certainly deserve attention. It would hardly seem a fair judgment to see the theoretical work of Father Furfey at Catholic University as negligible or as unrelated to the sociology of religion. When Father Fichter was writing his doctoral dissertation on the Augustan family legislation, John Donovan was writing a study of the role of the priest which was probably the first attempt to apply Parsonian categories to Catholic problems. It is little short of amazing that Father Fichter did not at least mention the work of John Kane and Gordon Zahn on Catholic-Protestant tensions, a problem certainly well within the domain of the sociology of religion. It is true that not all of these efforts have seen publication—although a number of them have—but it is often extremely difficult to publish specialized studies. The lack of interest on the part of many Catholics as well as the failure of Catholic authorities to see the importance of such works are important factors in this respect. They are factors about which the scholar can do little. It is doubtful if Father Fichter's zealous exhortations will improve the situation when they are combined with giving the impression that nothing worthwhile is being done. Moreover, sometimes a lack of tact on the part of sociologists who in practice forget the limitations of the role of scientific observer can increase the difficulties involved, as Father Fichter must realize.

I will not go into my own work, but I believe that I am the only Catholic sociologist in this country who has done sustained work on a non-Catholic religious body, parts of which have appeared in the leading sociological journals in this country and concerning which a book is appearing at the present time.

Certainly even such an incomplete list as this, while it does not subvert Father Fichter's thesis of the slowness of Catholics in this field (a thesis with which I agree), does make the situation appear a little less barren than it does to your author's somewhat myopic view.

A second point which deserves treatment at length can only be mentioned here. Father Fichter states: "The sociologist does not go to Scripture, Church Fathers, theologians, canon law or other ecclesiastical documents for his data. He seeks empirical, contemporary data. . ." This is truly a remarkable statement. The author, especially in view of his stressing his own and his field's scientific character so strongly, should refrain from such lapses into pontification. In any

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new field there is always a strong temptation for a man to define the field after his own experience. But this statement of Father Fichter's is palpably ridiculous to anyone with the slightest knowledge of the field and its great figures. Did Weber and Troeltsch, or H. Richard Niebuhr and some of the others he mentions, abide by Father Fichter's pronouncement in this respect? I know that I have not. It is entirely arbitrary to limit the field to contemporary data. Maitland may have exaggerated when he declared that sociology must become historical or become nothing, but Father Fichter might ponder the thought. In the Middle Ages most theologians looked upon social mobility ambitions as contrary to the fundamental natural order. This view—certainly not implied by the basic Catholic position—was the result of social and historical conditioning. I for one am interested in such things and in the way they enter into contemporary Catholic problems in America. Moreover, I seriously doubt if one can study the sociological aspects of the clerical-lay relations in this country without going "to Scripture, Church Fathers, theologians, canon law or other ecclesiastical documents for his data." Some of us who have a fairly varied research experience not limited to any one type of institution would like to be much less dogmatic.

And finally it is quite astonishing to see an empirically oriented scholar failing to raise some of the empirical problems facing young Catholic scholars in this country. What about the difficulties of Catholic scholars in secular universities where their colleagues are interested in other problems? What about the struggling young laymen who are so overburdened by teaching load and harassed by the financial worries resulting from low salaries that one finds in some of the smaller Catholic colleges in this country? Some of them find it hard to find time to finish their theses. Perhaps this astigmatism of Father Fichter's can be best explained by the conditioning of perspective by social status.

At any rate, while I agree with most of what Father Fichter has to say, it seems to me that the overall impression he leaves with the reader may be unfortunate.

THOMAS F. O'DEA,
Associate Professor of Sociology,
Fordham University.

Notre Dame, Ind.

TO the Editors: What was left unsaid about the Sociology of Religion in my article would fill a book, which I hope someday to write. Most of what Professor O'Dea "finds missing" in this article I have said elsewhere in lectures, articles and books.

Two items, however, need reiteration. (a) In any utilitarian view of the field of social science, sociological research is indeed "ancillary to administration." The data we collect, the generalizations we make, while contributing to the general storehouse of sociological knowledge, also form a kind of propaedeutic to social action. They are "applied" by managers, pastors, administrators. (b) Again, in this empirical approach, the research scientist focuses on "people in the present." This does not deny the obvious importance of tracing the origins and development of contemporary behavior and of making historical comparisons. Perhaps the greatest weakness among some of my colleagues is their penchant for staying safely in the past. Professor O'Dea is not one of these.

(*Rev.*) JOSEPH H. FICHTER, S.J.

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MAN TALKING TO HIMSELF MOSTLY

IT WILL SOON be twenty years since I began to write. Most of what I have written has appeared in the "unofficial," barely legitimate Catholic press. In fact I have been told more than once that I was not writing for the Catholic press at all but for some neither-fish-nor-fowl variant. During the height of the McCarthy controversy, for instance, we learned from a brutal public announcement that it was "unfortunate" The Commonweal was known as a Catholic publication, for it had no official status as the voice of a Bishop, a religious order or authorized Catholic association. It was merely a magazine of opinion edited by Catholic laymen.

Only now is that wound beginning to heal. Not that there was anything untrue about the statement. It was the "unfortunate" that bothered me. It bothered me, not only because it dismissed fifteen years of my life with a policy statement but, much more importantly, because it seemed to imply that there was something binding about the opinions on political and social questions found in the official church papers and written for the most part by laymen. The day I read that statement I burned. I was ready to destroy my typewriter and find a job as a shoe salesman, or at least find a job in secular journalism. I did in fact find another job. But I did not stop writing for the maybe-Catholic press. I cooled down. Here I am, it is four years later, and I am still doing business at the same old stand.

I ask myself why.

It takes a certain arrogance to set oneself up as a writer of the kind found in these pages. If all it amounts to is setting one's opinions down on paper—and that *is* all it amounts to—there is still an inescapable uneasiness every time one puts paper in the typewriter. Are these opinions worth setting down? The answer is obviously no, at least most of the time. I know there are writers, in and out of the Catholic press, who have a sense of mission. They feel that they have Something To Say, some Truth to express that might otherwise go unuttered. I might be one of these myself, for pride is a subtle thing, but I hope not. I have too much regard for the truth to believe I have been called to present it to the world. On the other hand if you are unkind enough to tell me I have too little regard for it to throw my typewriter away you will be right.

Any man with a grain of maturity realizes after awhile that he leaves fingermarks on the truth that passes through his hands. A writer soon learns that what he says does not come out the way he wanted it to come out. The truth he has grasped, through the grace of God, is not ennobled by his words, though his words might be ennobled by the truth.

But writing is a curse. No sensible man should have anything to do with it. In fact most sensible men do not. The wisest men I know have to be bullied and badgered into writing a simple article. Clods do not hesitate to do a column a week, or one a day. If there were editions enough, I suppose some of us would be willing to turn out one every hour on the hour.

I ask myself why a writer who is not a master of life and language writes at all.

Why do "mere journalists" like me give themselves away in little teaspoonfuls? Why not keep our opinions to ourselves, or at least confine them to the family circle? After almost two decades I am faced with the appalling fact that I have written hundreds of columns, thousands of sentences, millions of words. Consider it all and you might salvage two really good columns, five good sentences, maybe a dozen instances where the choice of word was inspired. But, friend, you have to dig, dig, dig to find the gold in these hills.

Suppose you ask me what good it did, all this labor, all this closeting of oneself with one's thoughts, all this silly staring into space? The question will embarrass me. Was anyone ever moved to change his way of life? I doubt it. Did anyone ever feel that finally he had found the Truth? I would be suspicious of such a one. Did anyone ever say, "This is it; this solves my problem"? I at least find that hard to believe.

I can think of only one happy result. It is that somehow speaking out in the loud voice which even a little magazine gives a writer has helped life along. The gift of himself such as a writer makes to unknown readers is not wholly without merit. No writer is so worthless that some readers do not benefit from the gift. I may have written a lot of foolish things. There is, I tell myself, value for you in reacting to foolishness. I may often have been less than wise. There is a certain value for you in recognizing my stupidity: it is a way of appreciating your own wisdom. I may have written a lot of things I would like to recall. But everybody has said a lot of things he would like to recall; the only difference is that the writer playing the fool does so in public.

So if you are thinking of being a writer (I don't mean a Writer), let a veteran welcome you to the fold, though if he had the sense he was born with he would advise you to sell shoes. But if he had good sense he would not be a writer.

If you have no inclination to be a writer, accept my congratulations. You are a well man.

JOHN COGLEY.

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When Eternity is Receding

MORNING. By Julian Fane. Reynal. $3.50.

By WILLIAM DUNLEA

IF THE WHOLENESS of the child's exclusive universality is but rarely recovered by poets, it is a closed book to the novelist. The poet exploits and encumbers childhood and it becomes a mythic blur: the lost luminosity and the self-contained images evade his palette. What emerges is a different poetry; a novel would be beyond conceiving.

The author of *Morning* takes up in middle boyhood, when eternity is receding, when the wholeness is starting to give: the brittle vessel tenuously holding a universe will with terrifying suddenness soon be a potsherd; the unique beauty of childhood, its clarity, will have flown, and the child will be casting about fearfully, furiously seeking to reclaim it. Now all will have to be explained, and clarity itself placed in a new light.

Master Vere is seven. We follow him expectantly through every door, over every path, into every garden and field—wondering and dreaming with him, laughing, sorrowing, hoping; most of all hoping, though sadly, for we know his looming struggle must be lost. He is eight. We suffer his pangs as he begins to be aware of alteration, of the transience of all he is going through, yet later we do not dare feel the release which this awareness at length brings him. The uneven contest between the boy and the unknown, the world outside, downed in its early phase, gathers almost tragic momentum; the monster is sensed more acutely for not being seen as it awaits the forfeiting of its prey.

We can hardly bear to see him grow resigned, but know that his hope is passing through the final convulsions of rebellion; there shall be no rescue from the limbo of boarding school and the institutionalized ritual of growing up. Time alone is captain of the spoils. The years are 1938-39; as Vere goes off to school his father departs for another upheaval.

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is fond of sliding back the boundaries of routine, while secretly loving every minute of it. Vere's parents are intermittent figures with whom he has uncomfortable exchanges (the father's habitual term of endearment is "monkey"), and for whom his affection sometimes falls in doubt; his attitude towards his arrogant elder brother often fluctuates, and on balance they are incompatible; Nanny the nurse and Flora the nursemaid are his most settled friends. What he misses is *the* friend.

In his first novel Julian Fane knows how to picture simple incidents as if they were the events of the child's fancy. He may well be purging off old sores and telltale embarrassments, but this puts no kinks in the rhythmic narrative of mutative growth, always translated to individual, quasi-impressionistic effects. The civilized sensuousness and intimate orchestration of his evocation of nature, when it is ceasing to be all ether and caresses and just becoming a wistful stirring, fixes with exactness the precise tempo and the controlling mood.

Without it, the pathos of the moment the child surprises within his world could not be so sparely conveyed; nor could the birthday picnic in the nut-hedge so far outsoar the merely homespun as to suggest a banquet of souls; nor would the helpless grief of Vere be so affecting as he watches his beloved mare bleed and stagger beneath his father's lash at the fox-hunt. Without it the inevitable sundering would be lushly sentimental. The one quality *Morning* does not have from which it might have gained is that of being "naive."

This is the sort of minor triumph about which it is usually said: "Well it isn't *great,* but . . ." It may be added that in certain ways the great is never so good. Whether it was hard for Mr. Fane to make it all look so unlabored is beside the point: it is not the labor (as the lad himself discovers) but the sense of obedience to the inner master. What matters is that the reader will be convinced this was the book that awaited its author.

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Like A Christian Socrates

THE LIVING GOD. By Romano Guardini. Translated by Stanley Godman. *Pantheon.* $2.75.

By LEO R. WARD

WHAT does a man do when he stands in the presence of the living God, how does he manage to stand there and how does he know that he does stand there? These are the questions in which Guardini is always interested, and he thinks the answers to them more important to man and society than answers to scientific and philosophical questions, though to such questions and answers he allots a place of respect. The present little book is made up of talks given in church to help people come to a living and positive reply to Guardini's questions.

Ordinary good men are only vaguely aware of standing before God, and Guardini, himself like one sent by God and with a grasp of the holy and "numinous," takes brief texts, some familiar and some cryptic, and asks his people to live again with him what is said. "Come not near: take off thy shoes: the place is holy ground." "If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart." "Thy will be done." "Abraham called the place: God sees."

In these and other Biblical thoughts, Guardini is living and asks us to be living into the meaning of God, into the nearness of God, the mercy and truth of God. When the Bible wants to say that a person or thing has passed the final test of truth, it says that it stands in the sight of God; it is penetrated by Him to its depths: "He hears its innermost silence, and He confirms what it claims to be." And the will of God, so often seen in purely moral terms, is far more; it is what ought to happen in the world, to emerge from the interplay of natural forces and from man's freedom; it is the consummation of divine freedom.

In short, Guardini is a sort of Isaias and a sort of Paul, but I think that even more he is a sort of Christian Socrates. In his famous commentary on the trial and death of Socrates, he has described his hero in words that fit himself: how reverent his nature is, and though he is no absolutist, how relentlessly he puts people into a position of new and dangerous responsibility.

At the same time, one might have difficulties with the present book. Guardini tends to bypass reason

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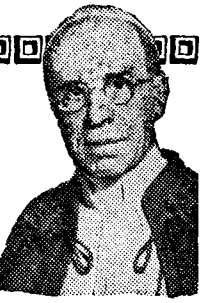

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and to depend with James and Kierkegaard on sense and feeling. Speaking of the mystery of the divine seeing, he says: we have seen its greatness, felt its depth, sensed in it something of the meaning of God's inner life. Again he says: "Let us call the organ by which man knows the Living God a sense of the pattern of life: the feeling that a fundamental order does exist and a feeling of the source from which it comes and the feeling that fundamentally it is a holy order."

Another hitch is that this meditation does not seem deeply immersed in today's suffering, in today's existentialist predicament, but appears to be as if outside it and prior to it. Also, chapter by chapter, these meditations-vignettes are more on God and my soul, God and myself, than on God and the human community or on God and civilization. In this regard, they are remarkably unlike Guardini's wonderful work on the Church and the Catholic. Though excellent, as is everything that Guardini does, they could not begin to stand up alongside that work.

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WERE WARS, on the aggressor's part, ever fought for aught but money and loot? Some modern scholars see the cause of the Greek war on Troy not as an attempt to recover a mythical Helen but as an attempt to capture a valuable trading post. The argument is that a favorable geographical position is a misfortune for nations who do not want war. And the argument finds support, for example, in the fate of unhappy Poland hemmed in by a powerful Germany and an even more powerful Russia.

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history, frequently hazardous, increasingly so since it was transformed into a canal, and still more hazardous since oil was discovered in the Middle East and the Canal inevitably became the most convenient and economic means for transporting it to the West. It also became responsible for that impact of West on East which threatens not only to revolutionize the existence of the once indolent Arab Mid-East but also to create ideological and armed conflict on a world-wide scale.

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Pharaoh Necho is reputed to have attempted the redigging of the canal in 609 B.C., giving up the project after sacrificing the lives of 120,000 slaves. In the following century, the conqueror, Darius the Great, ordered the canal re-dug. In the last century before the Christian era the canal was probably filled in. During its occupation of Egypt, Rome revived the project. Restored under the name of Canal of Trajan, after the Emperor, it provided a passageway for tiny merchant ships and armed galleys, and for the shipping of circus animals from the Orient. The Canal came to an end in 776 when Arab invaders captured Egypt. Fearing attack from rebellious subjects, they filled in the canal. Thenceforth for eleven

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Outlook on Politics

If it can be said that The Commonweal operates according to any political dogma, it is the right to take a fresh look at things periodically, to make all judgments tentative and to consider the total political situation, expecting the inevitable moral ambiguities, and then make a pragmatic judgment which does no violence to basic moral principles, though often the judgment—as long as politics remains in the sinful hands of men and not angels—will be not ideal but merely the lesser of two evils. Someone has said that politics consists in making a constant series of lesser-evil choices . . . if one waits for the "ideal" and demands simon-pure conditions before taking any political step, he will be paralyzed into inaction, or, he will join the angry Utopians.

As Catholics, the editors of The Commonweal look for guidance to the social and political principles which are to be found in the papal encyclicals. . . . But it has been our contention that the principles are not meant to be wrapped up in pretty words and then put aside. Some applications are obvious.

It is difficult, for instance, to see how any Catholic can consistently oppose the UN and every possible manifestation of the international spirit and still pay lip service to the recent papal directives. . . . The area of proper disagreement between Catholics is wide indeed, but we feel that the Catholic publicist simply cannot leave the papal peace program in a pious rhetorical vacuum. —The Commonweal, February 5, 1954

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hundred years trade was carried o by camel caravans. The scheme t reopen the canal was revived mo than once, and Napoleon Bonapart gave the idea serious consideratio

During the early nineteenth ce tury the canal project came up wit great frequency. It was the Frenc man, Ferdinand de Lesseps, wh gave the plan final form, achievir his dream only after years and yea of heartrending struggle, whic makes a saga of character an singleheartedness. Well, Nasse may come, and Nassers may go, bu —it is not so certain that the Can will go on forever. For there's th Atom Bomb, and there too a those who can and will fill in th Canal, as Nasser has already don when the suitable occasion arises.

Play of Mind

ANY NUMBER CAN PLAY. By Clifto Fadiman. World. $5.

By JAMES P. DEGNAN, JR.

MR. FADIMAN has written an other book. This one, a co lection of essays whimsically entitle *Any Number Can Play*, "is ded cated to the lively idea that Amer cans can generate as much enthusi asm for the play of the mind as the have already developed for drivin a small white ball into a slightl larger hole." In this latest effort M Fadiman turns out to be somewha of a literary Norman Vincent Peal He is sanguine. He is positive. H lives 365 days a year and he says i effect: "Don't miss the fun of think ing." His remarks in the Prefator are dedicated to the proposition tha "we can make the play of the min salable to the great majority." H gleefully anticipates "an immortalit of leisure" based on the prophecy c Dr. Lawrence S. Kubie that "bio logical science is bound eventually t discover a means of stopping th process of physical decay."

All of which should do nothin more than provoke a yawn or per haps an uneasy memory of T. H Huxley. Even Mr. Fadiman admit that the leisure problem is getting t

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be old hat. But he needs some excuse to gather together his essays which are supposed to make us think, or something, and the Prefatory is it.

The essays themselves, excepting the strictly literary, are occasionally charming; frequently inane; and sometimes patently absurd. The literary essays might charitably be described as unrewarding.

Mr. Fadiman is charming when he deals with the innocuous. His essays on babies, nursery rhymes, eccentrics, quotations, and house-hunting are pleasant.

He is inane when he tries to be funny, and unfortunately he tries quite often.

He seems to dislike controversy (the consequence, I suppose, from years of moderating people) but occasionally he becomes mildly contentious and it is generally upon these occasions that he demonstrates what I can only call patent absurdity.

REVIEWERS

William Dunlea, a free-lance writer, is a frequent contributor to The Commonweal.

Father Leo R. Ward, C.S.C., a member of the faculty of the University of of Notre Dame, contributes to various religious and cultural journals.

John Cournos is a well-known critic and anthologist.

James P. Degnan makes his first contribution to The Commonweal with this review.

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MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Christmas greetings? At this time of year? Yes, indeed. Because, right now, at the Guild, the Spirit of Christmas is very much with us. For us, it's "Clear the shelves! Make way for Christmas, and . . . for Christmas gifts!"

But, right now, it's you who get the gifts. "They're practically giving things away," you'll agree, with glee, when you see our new low, low prices. Prices are down, 'way, 'way down, but only because we must empty our shelves and bins, must make space for the crates of Christmas creches and cadeaux that are already cramming the customhouse aisles as they crowd in from all over three continents.

For gifts you're proud to give, at prices you're glad to pay, do your Christmas shopping now at the Guild Book Shop.

Listed below are but a few of the items you can buy right now at savings greater than any ever before offered by the Guild:

1	Primitive wood sculpture of St. Anthony by Sanchez of New Mexico, 16½"	*was*	$65	*now*	$35
12	glazed ceramic crosses, pendants, made in Germany, 2"	*were*	$2.50	*now*	.97
1	18th century Spanish Nativity, painted terra cotta in high relief	*was*	$25	*now*	$9
3	sterling silver rosaries	*value*	$15	*now*	$9.50
10	sterling medallions by F. Py, 2¼" diameter, on velvet plaques	*were*	$14	*now*	$9
1	Crucifix, silver corpus on marble, 10½"	*value*	$20	*now*	$10
1	Flight into Egypt, 18th century German tinted steel engraving, framed, 30"	*was*	$75	*now*	$40
30	Unframed reproductions of Old Master drawings	*were*	$2.50	*now*	$1
1	polychromed terra cotta statue of St. Joseph by Gruer, 15"	*was*	$45	*now*	$25
9	Italian icon crucifixes after original in Basilica, Assisi	*were*	$7	*now*	$3.50

MISSALS—all published before the Congregation of Sacred Rites' revision effective January 1, 1956, formerly $3.75 to $25, now up to ½ off.

PAPERBACKS—dozens and dozens, all current and popular, including Anthologies, Biographies, Drama, Essays, History, Novels, Philosophy, Poetry, Short Stories, but no religious titles. Select the titles you want; save from 55 cents to one dollar on every group of three, formerly 50 to 65 cents each, now three for 95 cents.

GREETING CARDS—Everyday and Special Day—immaculate cards, regularly priced up to fifty cents each, now packaged twelve to a cellophane bag, and, (a typical assortment worth $2.25), priced per package of twelve at one dollar.

"TO THE ALTAR OF GOD"—A book of prayers and guidance for the young, published in Ireland by the Guild Book Shop and issued at $2.40 each, $25 the dozen; now only $18 the dozen, each $1.80

AND,—much more. Many prints and paintings, oils and water colors, framed and unframed; medals and medallions, plaster, parchment, terra cotta, porcelain and ceramics—everything you'd expect to find at the Guild, at prices much lower than you'd ever expect to pay.

All top-quality merchandise: quantities strictly limited; all sales final.
For the finest Christmas gifts shop now at the Guild Book Shop

the Guild Book Shop 117 EAST 57 STREET, NEW YORK 22, NEW YORK

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